

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 00986 011316Z
ACTION EA-09

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 0986

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: SHUM PINS LA AU UK FR US
SUBJ: LPDR RELEASES EVERINGHAM AND FIVE OTHER WESTERNERS

REF: VIENTIANE 0979 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: LPDR JUNE 30 RELEASED TO RESPECTIVE
EMBASSIES THE AUSTRALIAN, BRITISH AND FRENCH NATIONALS
ARRESTED JUNE 23. EVERINGHAM HAS LEFT LAOS AND THE OTHERS
EXPECT TO LEAVE SHORTLY. SOME OF THEM HAVE REPORTED DETAILS
OF THEIR INTERROGATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN AND JOURNALIST FOR THE FAR EAST ECONOMIC
REVIEW AND BBC JOHN EVERINGHAM, BRITISH CITIZENS RAY ORAM,
HIS WIFE SUCHITRA, AND JAMES KENNEDY; AND FRENCH CITIZENS
FRANCOISE CHAUVE AND GEORGE BIBOLLET WERE RELEASED TO THE
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 00986 011316Z

CUSTODY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE EMBASSIES 1500 JUNE 30. CHARGES
AGAINST THE DETAINEES WERE LEVIED IN A MOCK TRIAL CONDUCTED
BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS OF
THE LAO MFA BUT, ACCORDING TO ORAM, DIRECTED BY THE LEADER
OF THE LAO "SECRET POLICE" DETACHMENT WHO LED THE ARREST
OPERATION. THE TRIAL WAS HELD IN FATHER MENDER'S FORMER CHURCH
WHERE A TABLE OF CONFISCATED "EVIDENCE" FROM EVERINGHAM'S

HOME WAS DISPLAYED: AN AIRGUN, ARTISTIC PHOTOS OF SEMI-CLAD ASIAN WOMEN, OPIUM PIPES, A SMALL AMOUNT OF OPIUM, A LARGE BAG OF MARIJUANA AND SEVERAL CONDOMS. IN ADDITION TO THE DETAINEES, OFFICIALS FROM THE MFA AND LAO POLICE AND DIPLOMATS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN, FRENCH AND BRITISH EMBASSIES ATTENDED THE "TRIAL".

2. EVERINGHAM WAS DECLARED PERSONA NON GRATA, ASKED TO LEAVE THE LPDR WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, AND DEPARTED 1045 A.M.

JULY 1. ACCORDING TO THE LAO PARTY NEWSPAPER "VOICE OF THE PEOPLE" JULY 1, EVERINGHAM WAS FOUND GUILTY OF (1) POSSESSION OF SECRET DOCUMENTS, (2) POSSESSION OF A "HENRY" 45-BB GUN LOADED WITH A POISONOUS BULLET, (3) ESTABLISHING AN ESPIONAGE ORGANIZATION AND BASE FOR CONTACTING REBELS IN AND OUT OF THE COUNTRY AND USING RAY ORAM AS HIS LIAISON AGENT IN THIS NETWORK, (4) USING FOREIGN CURRENCY ILLEGALLY WITHIN LAOS, (5) ESTABLISHING AN OPIUM AND MARIJUANA SMOKING PARLOR, AND (6) ENGAGING IN IMMORAL ACTIVITIES.

3. EVERINGHAM REPORTEDLY TOLD AN AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT NIGHT OF JUNE 30 THA DURING HIS INTERROGATION HIS ALLEGED "INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CIA" WAS CONSTANT THEME. HE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT VIRTUALLY THE ENTIRE INTERROGATION FOCUSED ON HIS ALLEGED "INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES".

4. DURING HIS CAPTIVITY LAO "SECRET POLICE" RANSACKED
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PAGE 03 VIENTI 00986 011316Z

EVERINGHAM'S HOUSE AND CONFISCATED ALL OF THE PHOTOS AND NOTES HE HAD TAKEN DURING THE LAST TEN YEARS; MTHEY DID NOT PERMIT EVERINGHAM TO TAKE ANY OF HIS POSSESSIONS OUT OF THE COUNTRY WITH HIM. DURING THE SAME PERIOD "SECRET POLICE" RANSACKED ORAM'S HOUSE AND HE IS MISSING A CONSIDERABLE SUM OF MONEY, HIS CAMERAS, CASSETTE RECORDER AND CASSETTES, AND OTHER VALUABLES.

5. THE AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMAT SAID THAT HE DOUBTED THAT THE ARREST WOULD AFFECT LAO-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS AND SAID SPECIFICALLY THAT THE ARREST PROBABLY WOULD NOT CAUSE THE EMBASSY TO MAKE NEGATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING AN AUSTRALIAN AID PROGRAM FOR LAOS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION.

6. THE DIPLOMAT SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT EVERINGHAM HAD BEEN UNDER CLOSE SURVEILLANCE BY LAO AUTHORITIES AND THAT THE INCIDENT SIGNALLED THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW AND RELATIVELY EFFICIENT LAO INTELLIGENCE SERVICE.

7. LAO AUTHORITIES ORDERED ORAM AND HIS WIFE TO LEAVE LAOS WITHIN 48 HOURS. THEY CHARGED ORAM WITH SERVING AS EVERINGHAM'S ACCOMPLICE IN THE ALLEGED ESPIONAGE ORGANIZATION. THEY ACCUSED

KENNEDY, CHAUVE AND BIBOLLET WITH SERVING AS "LIAISON" FOR EVERINGHAM AND ORDERED THEM TO LEAVE LAOS WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME.

8. KENNEDY TOLD EMBOFF THAT DURING THEIR SIX DAY CAPTIVITY EACH PRISONER WAS INTERROGATED SEPARATELY AND ORDERED TO SIGN STATEMENTS SUPPLYING WHATEVER INFORMATION THEY COULD THAT WOULD INCRIMINATE EVERINGHAM. FOR EXAMPLE, KENNEDY SAID HE WROTE A STATEMENT IN ENGLISH SAYING HE KNEW JOHN EVERINGHAM AND HAD VISITED HIM THREE OR FOUR TIMES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TO USE HIS DARKROOM TO DEVELOP PHOTOS. THE NEXT DAY KENNEDY WAS GIVEN WHAT HE WAS TOLD WAS AN EXACT LAO TRANSLATION OF HIS ORIGINAL STATEMENT TO SIGN. KENNEDY COULD READ LAO WELL ENOUGH TO SEE THAT THE LAO VERSION CONTAINED AN ADDITIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 VIENTI 00986 011316Z

STATEMENT CLAIMING KENNEDY HAD SEEN EVERINGHAM SMOKE OPIUM. WHEN KENNEDY OBJECTED TO THIS LIE, HE WAS PERSUADED TO MAKE THE CONDITIONAL STATEMENT THAT PERHAPS JOHN EVERINGHAM MAY HAVE SMOKED OPIUM AT SOME TIME.

9. ORAM TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WAS PHYSICALLY MISTREATED DURING HIS SESSIONS BY THE POLICE LEADER THAT THE OTHER LAO CALLED THE "COMMASAN". AT ONE POINT THE "COMMASAN" GRABBED ORAM BY THE HAIR AND BANGED HIS HEAD AGAINST A CHURCH PEW. AS ANOTHER POINT THE "COMMASAN", SHAKING WITH RAGE, PULLED A REVOLVER FROM HIS HOLSTER AND HELD IT TO ORAM'S HEAD WHILE SHOUTING ABUSE.

10. KENNEDY AND ORAM BOTH SAID THAT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THIS ONE MAN, THE POLICE WERE CIVIL TO THE DETAINEES.

11. A BRITISH DIPLOMAT TOLD EMBOFF JULY 1 THAT THE EMBASSY HAD NOT YET DECIDED IF IT WOULD RECOMMEND TO LONDON THAT THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND VOLUNTEER SERVICES OVERSEAS PROGRAMS BE DISCONTINUED NEXT YEAR.

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